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Chairman: Mr. Escanero (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Mexico)

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00-70638 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 100: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*) (A/55/381, A/55/75-E/2000/55, A/55/74, A/55/133-S/2000/682, A/55/139-E/2000/93, A/55/157-E/2000/101, A/55/257-S/2000/766, A/55/260-E/2000/108, A/55/309, A/55/310, A/55/375 and A/55/473)

1. **Mr. Loh** Tuck Wai (Singapore) said that the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICT) was not only enriching the rich but also quietly helping some of the poor. Success stories in the developing countries had been posted on web sites — www.netaid.org, launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Cisco Systems, and www.iicd.org, the International Institute for Communications and Development of the Netherlands, designed to empower people to combat extreme poverty, and to help developing countries use ICT for sustainable development, respectively. The latter web site included a story about a Ugandan village woman who had launched an initiative to combat acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and, to finance it, by an organization known as Sapphire Women, which marketed baskets made by village women over the Internet and another about a young divorced woman who was able to earn a living transcribing the medical notes of United States doctors transferred by information technology.

2. Thanks to the Internet, it had taken hours rather than weeks to link relief organizations in Washington, D.C. to Honduran communities hit by hurricane Mitch; Jamaican farmers and women's groups in Cameroon and Gambia could access information about environment friendly technologies at community cyber centres; and school drop-out rates in Peru were being reduced, particularly in the poorest areas of Lima. People in developing countries also had access to the web site of the Agriculture Network Information Centre (www.cornell.agric.org) and the Health Network (www.health.net.nz). The information flow was not unidirectional but rather promoted dialogue and the exchange of information through e-mail and regional chat rooms in Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America.

3. His delegation welcomed the establishment of a task force of the Group of Eight to boost Internet access and help bridge the digital divide as well as the Secretary-General's initiative known as the United Nations Information Technology Service (UNITeS), in which global volunteers helped empower the poor to use information technology. In conclusion, he urged the international community to exploit ICT in its efforts to attain the Millennium Summit goal of halving poverty by 2015.

4. **Mr. Shen** Guofang (China) deplored the destabilization of many developing countries, particularly the small and vulnerable African economies and the least developed countries, and the widening gap between the income ratio of the richest and poorest nations (currently 74 to 1) in the age of globalization. The only way to ensure that globalization benefited all countries and peoples of the world was by regulating it through an effective and coordinated governing strategy and reforming the current global economic system. The United Nations would have a key role to play in that process.

5. A major component of such regulation should be reform of the current multilateral trading and financial system, which must be open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, as reiterated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2, para. 13). To achieve that it was necessary to enhance policy coordination, promote cooperation and focus greater attention on the needs of developing countries. An important precondition would be the full and effective participation of developing countries in the decision-making aspect of the reform exercise. The high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development should generate action-oriented results to that end, and its preparatory process should include input from the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). In an age of interdependence, the developing countries must implement sound domestic policies to promote poverty eradication and sustainable development; in turn, the international community must create a supportive environment for the developing countries, particularly with respect to financial resources, trade and science and technology.

6. With a view to bridging the digital divide, the international community should create an external environment that promoted developing countries' access to information technology for development. His delegation hoped that the United Nations would accord top priority to the promotion of information technology in support of development and play a leading role in

helping developing countries gain access to information technology. It appreciated the work done by various bodies of the United Nations system in that regard thus far and supported the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report, particularly with regard to strengthening infrastructure and enhancing the developing countries' ICT capabilities.

7. **Mr. Andrews** (New Zealand) said that, as an island remote from the centres of world commerce, New Zealand benefited greatly from information and communication technology and was an active participant in international transactions. Every effort must be made to ensure that the benefits of ICT were evenly distributed. Currently, 90 per cent of all Internet users lived in industrialized countries, while inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa accounted for only 0.1 per cent. The opportunities generated by the ICT revolution — in the areas of employment, education, health and environmental protection — could help the small island developing states of the Pacific region to offset their isolation and small internal markets. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the Ministerial Declaration adopted recently by the Economic and Social Council, particularly the recommendation to establish an ICT task force, which would facilitate public and private sector partnerships necessary to extend the benefits of globalization and information technology to the developing world. He cautioned, however, that ICT must not become another innovation which exacerbated division and inequity but rather one which helped to improve people's lives.

8. As a relatively isolated country which relied heavily on the agricultural sector for its export earnings and on access to developed country markets, New Zealand was keenly aware of the need for global cooperation and consensus in meeting various modern challenges, and for the integration of environmental, human rights and labour standards in international decision-making. His delegation strongly supported the Millennium Declaration's call for renewed commitment to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system (A/RES/55/2, para. 13) and, in that context, advocated a new round of multilateral trade negotiations to seek further trade liberalization, adopt fair rules governing multilateral trade and enhance the participation of developing countries in the multilateral trading system, including through the removal of protectionist policies, which cost developing country exporters an estimated US$ 700 billion a year, and the strengthening of the international financial system. It was equally important to ensure that globalization promoted core labour standards, environmental protection and human rights, and that women participated in its management. In that connection, a gender analysis of the globalization process and its impact would be useful. Lastly, he stressed the importance of moving beyond the North-South divide and developing partnerships with key non-governmental actors in globalization, including international economic institutions, the private sector and civil society.

9. **Mr. Adawa** (Kenya) said that globalization had made many developing economies, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, increasingly volatile and vulnerable to negative external shocks. In order to ensure that the developing countries, too, could reap the benefits of globalization and interdependence, the international community must promote the democratization of international economic decision-making; the integral consideration of trade, finance, and developmental issues by international institutions; the reform of the international financial system; and improved access by developing countries to resources, markets and science and technology.

10. In order to create an enabling international environment and genuine global partnership for development, it would be necessary to strengthen existing bilateral, multilateral and private financial flows, investment and trade; maintain international and national stability; and enhance the democratization process in international relations. An open, rule-based, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable multilateral trading system that accorded preferential treatment to the weak and vulnerable would be vital to that end. The United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions should provide new and additional financial resources to the developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa; and the international community should cancel external debt; fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance, with an additional 0.15 per cent to the least developed countries; increase flows of foreign direct investment for development; remove all trade barriers to accommodate developing countries' exports; provide financial assistance for scientific and technological capacity-building in the developing countries; help eradicate poverty, illiteracy, malaria and human

immunodeficiency virus (HIV/AIDS); address the impact of internal and external conflicts on development; combat environmental degradation; and provide disaster relief.

11. The United Nations should play a central role in promoting multilateral cooperation for development through genuine partnership, and its policies should be taken into account by the leading trade and multilateral financial institutions. His delegation fully supported the streamlining and harmonization of various United Nations initiatives and programmes on African development. In conclusion, the negative aspects of globalization had increased the urgency of establishing a new international economic order. To that end, developing countries must be fully involved in international economic decision-making, including in the reform of the multilateral trading and financial system.

12. **Ms. Taddei** (San Marino) noted that, ever since the session of the World Trade Organization held in Seattle, public opinion no longer remained silent on international economic issues, and that its priorities actually mirrored those of intergovernmental bodies: poverty eradication, debt relief and environmental protection. At the same time, the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, religious institutions and trade unions, were playing a much greater role in the work of the World Bank.

13. Rather than spelling their disappearance, globalization must afford greater opportunities to small countries willing to assume the responsibility of introducing necessary changes and abiding by the relevant rules with a view to enhancing their competitiveness. All States, regardless of their size, should be able to participate in the deliberations to establish new and transparent rules. In conclusion, the particular cultures and lifestyles of nations and regions must not be obliterated by the globalization process.

14. **Mr. Valdés** (Chile) said that globalization and interdependence affected the nature of external relations of all countries, as well as the daily lives of individuals. In Chile, the technological transformations that shortened distances and made instant communication possible were seen as positive factors for economic and social development. The ICT revolution promoted the development of open societies and could be a valuable and effective safeguard of fundamental rights and freedoms, for people could no longer plead ignorance of what was happening elsewhere. The new situation put the international community in a unique situation to promote a real policy of defence and promotion of peoples' rights. It was no longer politically or morally possible to not react or to refuse to help those affected.

15. Another aspect of globalization and interdependence was the density of commercial and financial exchanges between nations. That was a special opportunity for small countries such as his own. Chile had opened its economy and tried to integrate into the world economy, using its comparative advantages, and in just over 10 years, it had seen its economy double in size and poverty decline drastically. Chile's experience confirmed that economic globalization was a source of opportunities.

16. Globalization was also important as a cultural factor; travel and communications via the Internet should serve to promote a genuine dialogue between civilizations, to broaden people's horizons and to promote tolerance and personal enrichment. While realizing that globalization could also lead to cultural uniformity and threaten local and regional traditions, Chile believed that the challenge should be met by increasing investment in education.

17. Chile was working on all fronts: to enhance regional and universal statutes to defend human rights and democracy; to promote free trade at all levels and to help bring about tolerance and mutual respect for diverse cultural traditions in an open global society.

18. Although it was true that globalization could lead to greater inequalities, accepting globalization did not mean accepting the law of the jungle or anarchy. If globalization was to have a human face, it would be necessary to create global norms and institutions to regulate the various areas, including finance, technology, the environment and commerce.

19. The political will that was needed to reduce the inequalities, instability and crisis brought by globalization could only come from the Member States of the United Nations. According to the decision taken at the Millennium Summit, globalization must be regulated so that it could benefit all people, particularly the least privileged. That required a broad international consensus. The international community could not afford to make the mistake of allowing a small and exclusive group of countries to define the regulatory

norms and institutions. He valued the opinions of developed countries, but there had to be proper international governance.

20. The General Assembly should create a space in which all could participate in the definition of the new world. Because it had the necessary political legitimacy, the General Assembly had a major responsibility to preserve and extend the benefits of globalization to all, by seeking a broad consensus on common policies and strategies to promote a process of globalization characterized by inclusion and recognized as equitable, in which people came first.

21. His delegation would support all actions aimed at promoting such an inclusive, humanistic globalization. It would support measures to strengthen the work of the United Nations in science and technology, bearing in mind the need to eradicate the digital divide; and it was in favour of a new round of trade negotiations with the special aim of involving developing countries in world trade. Finally, the United Nations should fulfil its role of promoting development and supporting equity in the world economy by promoting a major international event on financing for development.

22. **Mr. Kobayashi** (Japan) said that the driving force behind globalization was information technology which made it possible for individual and private sector users to participate directly in global economic activities and for developing countries to pursue economic growth by leapfrogging technological ladders. While the private sector had primary responsibility for the development and promotion of information technology, public sector organizations also had a vital role to play, including by establishing adequate laws, systems and policies; developing the physical infrastructure required for the development of information technology; and integrating information technology into their own work. Moreover, developing countries should assume ownership over the promotion of information technology within their own borders and should use information technology as a means of achieving their policy goals in the areas of poverty eradication and economic and social development. In that regard, commitment and leadership at the highest political level was required.

23. The digital divide must be bridged if all countries were to enjoy the benefits of globalization. Specifically, developed countries could assist developing countries in their efforts to promote information technology through technological transfers, infrastructure development, advice on legislation and policy aimed at attracting investment and user training. Japan was preparing a comprehensive cooperation package consisting of official development assistance (ODA) and non-ODA public funds with a view to making available a total of US$ 15 billion for the development of information technology over a period of five years in developing countries. The package emphasized four policy dimensions, namely, intellectual assistance for policy and system-building; human capacity-building through training and education; infrastructure and networking; and the use of information technology in development assistance.

24. The United Nations could assist developing countries in their efforts by promoting the use of information technology while also mobilizing such technology in its operational activities. Furthermore, the United Nations and other relevant international organizations could participate in the formulation of international rules regarding security in cyberspace. Developing and developed countries, together with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations should further strengthen their cooperation and synergy so that all people could enjoy the benefits of globalization by bridging the information gap and making the best possible use of information technology.

25. **Mr. Klopotowski** (Poland) said that globalization had become a fashionable word to describe the emergence of a world that was no longer made up of relatively independent loosely related national States but, rather, of a closely integrated and electronically connected system in which national economic decisions must take into account international factors. The challenge was ensuring that the potential significant economic gains of that dynamic process were equitably distributed both within and among countries. Globalization was not yet truly global; its benefits were still limited to those countries that had been able to sufficiently develop their institutional and material infrastructure and to create an attractive economic environment. Out of a total of US$ 644 billion of foreign direct investment in 1998, developed countries had received 71.5 per cent, developing countries 25.8 per cent and countries with economies in transition 2.7 per cent. There was therefore a real danger of further marginalization of a significant part

of the world. If support for the policy of openness and financial liberalization in the developing world was to be sustained, globalization should not lead to the further impoverishment and marginalization of the poor countries. Otherwise, it would increasingly be called into question.

26. Globalization increased competitive pressures and might hurt certain sectors and regions by provoking social unrest and political disturbances. Growing economic interdependence made national economies vulnerable to external shocks, including financial contagion and currency crises. Satellite television and the Internet might adversely affect social cohesion, undermining traditional values and changing the behaviour patterns of local communities. The variety of challenges posed by globalization revealed the weaknesses of global institutions and highlighted the need for a more effective global cooperation focusing on better management of global interdependence. If globalization was to fulfil its great promise as an effective instrument for development, the approach of the international community towards that phenomenon should not be limited exclusively to economic and financial mechanisms designed to extend the range of world economic markets, but should also take into account the complex impact of economic globalization on the social and political life of nations.

27. Strong State institutions were crucial, since they determined the capacity of States to achieve effective integration into the world economy. Good governance was also a key factor in ensuring increased private capital flows to developing countries and mobilizing domestic financial resources for development. Moreover, apart from sound macroeconomic policy, structural reforms were essential. Such reforms should cover, inter alia, the building of effective financial and economic institutions, the elimination of corruption, development of democratic institutions, respect for private property and the establishment of an independent judiciary.

28. Information and communication technology was one of the major driving forces behind globalization. There was no doubt that such technology yielded important economic and social benefits and that new technologies stimulated scientific progress and enriched human choices. However, while education in information and communication technology was a necessity, the key to it remained traditional education.

29. **Mr. Amaziane** (Morocco) said that the digital divide between countries of the North and those of the South must be narrowed. Industrialized countries, which accounted for only 15 per cent of the world's population, had 88 per cent of Internet users. The fact that 80 per cent of the web sites used English, although that language was spoken by less than 15 per cent of the world's population, made access to the web even more difficult. There was agreement on the importance of information and communication technology for the development of developing countries. Furthermore, the bodies, agencies and funds of the United Nations system were making greater use of information and communication technology in national capacity-building and were implementing pilot projects using such technologies. However, while his delegation welcomed the various initiatives in that area by the United Nations system, it would have liked to receive information on the financial commitments made in that area in order to be able to assess the extent of such efforts.

30. In any case, he hoped that the international community would vigorously support the information and communication technology programmes of the United Nations agencies and the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations on the transfer of such technologies to developing countries. It was obvious that the necessary financial resources needed to be rapidly mobilized.

31. If any serious headway was to be made in the international economic, financial and trading system, developing countries must be allowed to participate, in accordance with the principles of transparency and democracy, in international decision-making machineries in the economic sphere in order to voice their concerns and interests. Moreover, there should be multilateral monitoring of the macroeconomic policies of the major economic powers to ensure that their decisions did not adversely affect the vital interests of other countries and to guarantee that the cost of financial crises were equitably shared among the various players. Lastly, international trade in products of export interest to developing countries should be liberalized and the obstacles preventing those countries from enjoying the comparative advantages that they had in several sectors should be removed. His delegation hoped that the process under way would provide the international community with the ideal

opportunity to make brave decisions to establish greater equity in international economic relations.

32. **Mr. Vencel** (Slovakia) recalled that many delegations had spoken of globalization as a double-edged sword which brought unprecedented opportunities for economic growth, yet further widened the disparities between the developed and the developing countries. The United Nations had the task of bridging the digital divide and helping the developing countries to share the fruits of the information revolution. The same concept of enabling the weak to develop their capacities should be applied in international development assistance, and he fully supported the Secretary-General's initiative on the United Nations Information Technology Service.

33. It was imperative that the international community give priority to the needs of the least developed countries. International initiatives in that area should be based on a system-wide inventory of ICT and related activities undertaken by United Nations entities and other forums. The international community could then decide on the best practices and provide advisory services for formulating policies for foreign direct investment and for attracting innovative information and communication technologies.

34. In order to succeed in that common objective it was necessary to mobilize all potential players in a more coordinated manner at the international, regional and local levels. The task force to be established under the Secretary-General's leadership and the proposed fund would contribute to policy coherence among the United Nations funds and agencies.

35. He commended the international organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the regional commissions, for their work to bridge the digital divide, in particular to tackle the lack of infrastructure, education, capacity-building, investment and connectivity in developing countries and countries in transition.

36. The technology and resources that were potentially available to address those problems did not always reach the areas of greatest need. The lack of basic human and physical infrastructure, and the limited prospects of returns on private capital were among the major obstacles.

37. In the extended partnership, all partners, including the private sector, civil society organizations, and local authorities, could be involved in achieving a fairer distribution of the potential of globalization.

38. **Mr. Zuffri** (Brunei Darussalam) said that human resources development geared towards information and communication technology was extremely important for optimizing the process of globalization. Countries must therefore equip their people to seize the available opportunities by investing in education programmes. However, that was not sufficient. Strengthened international cooperation was also needed to promote development in the context of globalization and interdependence. The United Nations was in a unique position to do all of that. In that regard, he commended the Economic and Social Council for devoting its high-level segment of July 2000 to the theme of "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy". He also welcomed the establishment of an information and communication task force.

39. He urged the developed countries to play an active role in providing the necessary assistance to all countries in need and urged the United Nations to help ensure that everyone benefited from the process.

40. **Mr. Jayanama** (Thailand) said that, unless handled properly, globalization could harm rather than benefit the developing countries. Yet they needed to participate in the process if they did not wish to be left behind in the race for economic and technological well-being.

41. The recent global economic crises had shown that globalization was market and technology-driven. Those aspects of globalization were well-known, but an understanding of its other aspects was also important. First, globalization was not a one-time event but a process, and therefore, it would evolve as a result of interactions among its key components: liberalization, multilateral trade and policies of the major economic powers. Second, countries could choose to join the process step by step as they were ready; such stage-by-stage participation of developing countries in globalization was permitted in both the IMF and WTO agreements. If a country did not have sufficient preparation or was too slow in joining the process, the developed countries, the international financial institutions and the United Nations could help them.

42. The Secretary-General had advocated the idea of a global compact for the private sector and the

narrowing of the digital divide, and some developed countries had already begun to assist with capacity-building and training in governance. But that was not enough. The developed countries and international financial institutions must also implement more global policy coherence in economic and financial areas, since policies of major countries did very much affect the well-being of developing countries. Coherence was strongly advocated in some sectors such as narcotics, small arms and nuclear non-proliferation, but not nearly to the same extent in trade and finance. The high-level event on financing for development would provide an excellent opportunity to discuss trade and financial coherence.

43. **Mr. Mohammad Kamal** (Malaysia) said that when the use of information and communication technology was consistent with local goals for social and economic development, it could contribute to the emergence of a truly global knowledge society, which was a prerequisite for sustainable development in the twenty-first century. Towards that end, Malaysia had embarked on an agenda for the intensification of knowledge use in all sectors of its economy. A multimedia super-corridor had been developed that created, for the first time ever, an integrated environment with all the unique elements and attributes necessary to create a global multimedia climate. A futuristic city by the name of Cyberjaya, equipped with world-class telecommunications network and other facilities to test ideas and concepts of e-business, had been set up within the multimedia super-corridor project.

44. The emerging and rapidly changing lifestyle and work practices associated with information and communication technology and knowledge societies had posed a greater challenge to women and other marginalized groups. Malaysia had made every effort to ensure that all segments of its society had access to new information technology, particularly computer and Internet facilities. At the Second Global Knowledge Conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and other members of the Global Knowledge Partnership had developed a global knowledge Action Plan.

45. Effective development required a careful balancing of the roles of government and the private sector across a broad range of policies and actions. Malaysia had always emphasized a strong partnership between the public and private sectors. That policy had enabled his country to attain a new level of international competitiveness and participate more actively in the emerging global information economy. His delegation was disheartened to note that less than 5 per cent of the world's population was engaged in activities related to information and communication technology and that the majority of the Internet host company computers were in rich countries.

46. It was imperative to examine what opportunities developing countries had with regard to benefiting from information and communication technology and what obstacles they faced. Greater efforts were required at all levels — national, regional and international — to assist developing countries enhance their capacity-building process and to better understand the various aspects of information and communication technology. Such cooperation would help to assure developing countries that venturing into information and communication technology would not be a risky endeavour or a leap into the dark, but a well-prepared and safe journey to building a global knowledge society.

47. **Mr. Kang** Jeong-Sik (Republic of Korea) said that globalization and growing interdependence among nations was opening up both new opportunities and new challenges. The global economy had actually brought prosperity to many different areas of the world, and ICT, when properly used, could help to address difficult issues as diverse as drug control and crime prevention, health, education, the environment and social equity.

48. However, globalization had another face. Many of the world's people were falling behind and becoming marginalized, while others had been forced to trade a sense of security for the cause of competition and efficiency. Enormous inequalities existed across the globe and often within countries. Those challenges needed to be addressed promptly and effectively.

49. The United Nations was in a unique position to lead the way towards harnessing the forces of globalization so that they could benefit all parts of the globe, while minimizing their potential risks. It should play a catalytic role in formulating policy responses to the challenge of globalization, should fill any institutional deficit resulting from greater international integration and should develop effective partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society. His delegation was

fully committed to making its due contribution to that task.

50. **Ms. Leonce** (Saint Lucia) said that the United Nations had played a central role in many initiatives and policies that had been pursued on a worldwide scale, with the hope of attaining peace, security and development. There had been a process of globalization of democracy, of peace, and of cooperation and the United Nations had rightfully asserted its leadership in those areas. However, other aspects of life including the economy were also being globalized, and there the process was being led by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the private sector. As a result, there was no global discussion or participation and there were no agreed commitments on economic matters or technology. That was not as it should be for according to the Charter, the United Nations also had a mandated role to play in development.

51. The globalizing economy represented the interests of developed countries and profit-driven corporations and individuals. Of the 100 largest economic units, 51 were corporations and 49 were countries; the 200 largest corporations employed less than one third of 1 per cent of the global workforce, but controlled over 30 per cent of the world's wealth. Those corporations were a formidable force in the world economy, yet they were privately owned and the benefits were concentrated in the hands of a few people and countries. There would be no development or benefit for developing countries in the corporate global economy.

52. At a time of such glaring disparities and injustice, the role of Governments and the United Nations in the global economy was being weakened and consequently diminished. Moreover, UNDP and the World Bank had adopted a new policy orientation of creating an enabling environment for the private sector rather than preparing development projects for developing countries as originally mandated. The United Nations unit for monitoring transnational corporations had been effectively silenced and even in the Second Committee, the time allotted to subjects of concern to developing countries, such as globalization, was increasingly compromised, and thus their concerns were marginalized.

53. The benefits of globalization must be globalized in the same way as democracy, peace and international cooperation, and the international community must take decisive, meaningful action. The United Nations must assume leadership as it had in other areas and ensure that the weak and vulnerable were protected. Its mandated role was not to assist in facilitating global markets for the private sector, nor to build an army to control the rebelling poor and desperate but rather to uphold the principles of equity, justice, and an integrated approach to development for the benefit of all the people.

54. Given the economic situation of most developing countries the Committee should be discussing not debt relief but debt cancellation, special and differential treatment on a contractual basis, and the meeting of United Nations targets for official development assistance within the first decade of the new millennium.

55. Discussion of a monitoring unit in the United Nations for transnational corporations and a code of conduct for such corporations should be revived and the United Nations agencies working for development, UNDP, UNCTAD and UNIDO should be given resources and personnel, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries.

56. Phased liberalization should take account of markets of vastly different sizes and strength, and the global economy should respect the role of Governments. Otherwise, all the gains in democracy, decolonization and international cooperation would amount to nothing. If globalization continued as currently conducted, the new millennium would have only one culture, and it would not be poverty that was eradicated but the poor.

57. The international community was unanimous in condemning terrorism, promoting democracy and defending human rights. Yet the small, weak and vulnerable continued to be terrorized into unsustainable development options and destructive liberalization. Undemocratic institutions and policies were promoting economic colonization, and the right to development of the developing countries was being violated. While there was much talk of poverty eradication, little was being done to address its causes.

58. The United Nations must fulfil its development mandate or else the current "globalism", like terrorism, communism and imperialism, would lead to injustice, oppression and death.

59. **Mr. Aung Htoo** (Myanmar) said that globalization was now accepted as a fact of life, and information and communications technology had played a pivotal role in the process. The early promise of globalization was still an illusion for most of the developing countries, however. The time had come to bridge the digital divide and utilize information and communications technology to benefit the developing countries.

60. Without Internet access, the potential benefits from e-commerce, tele-medicine, and distance education, could not be achieved. In order to achieve such access it would be necessary to invest heavily in the telecommunications sector, establish necessary institutions, develop human resources and provide a conducive framework of government policies.

61. His delegation was therefore encouraged by the Economic and Social Council's decision to establish an ICT task force and trust fund. The United Nations must play a critical role in closing the digital divide by providing an interface between the information technology community and the development community.

62. His delegation believed that the establishment of integrated multipurpose and multimedia community information centres, as suggested in the Council's Ministerial Declaration, would not only provide affordable connectivity in developing countries but would serve as education centres for the dissemination of technology at the grass-roots level.

63. In a developing country like Myanmar with limited resources, harnessing the new technology was a daunting task, but his Government was determined to utilize the new technology as much as possible. To fully utilize the potential of such technology at country level, the respective United Nations agencies on the ground must provide advisory services in the formulation of policies for the acquisition of ICT and the legal, fiscal and institutional framework needed, including an intellectual property rights regime.

64. **Mr. Bautista** (Philippines) said that his Government had tried to capitalize on the benefits of information and communications technology so as to bring the benefits of globalization to its people and ensure that they were not excluded from the emerging information economy. His Government was in the process of establishing the necessary legal infrastructure, in recognition of the importance of electronic commerce and the need for public confidence in the emerging digital economy. It was also seeking to optimize the use of ICT to enhance productivity and efficiency and to provide electronic access to public information and services through web sites and by making it possible to conduct some transactions electronically. It was also investing significantly in ICT infrastructure for the people, through, for example, computer facilities in science high schools and selected secondary schools.

65. The major challenges in bringing the benefits of ICT to the developing world were lack of infrastructure and the need for education, capacity-building, investment and connectivity. The concept of interdependence must permeate the discussion of all agenda items and draft resolutions. The success of the work done on the environment, financing for development, poverty alleviation and other related areas would in the end benefit all of humanity. Sadly, the opposite was also true.

66. **Mr. Husain** (Observer, Organization of the Islamic Conference) said that the Organization of the Islamic Conference was also working to provide Internet access and develop communications technology throughout the developing world, and he described a number of its initiatives in that area.

67. The Conference was interested in the proposal to form an ICT task force under the leadership of the Secretary-General, as all its members were developing countries which stood to benefit from the initiative. It welcomed the suggestion to intensify South-South cooperation in ICT for development projects, including ideas and projects for enhancing direct connectivity among developing countries. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's suggestion to mobilize 30,000 new ICT trainers, primarily from developing countries, in conjunction with the initiative for a United Nations Information Technology Service.

68. In closing, he once again acknowledged the common interest in promoting information technology in support of development efforts and facilitating a process of globalization that would spread its benefits to all countries.

69. **Mr. Khan** (Director, Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that globalization had emerged as the central challenge to the international community, with development and poverty eradication its central

goals. The United Nations had a key role to play in that area.

70. The newly established information and communications technology task force would help to strengthen the partnership with the private sector in expanding access and using ICT as a tool to achieve the social and economic goals which had been on the United Nations agenda for decades. The three key elements of the question were a regulatory environment and policy framework for connectivity, how to achieve connectivity and access for the poorest countries, and ways and means of developing human capacity.

71. A consultative process had been initiated to which the Secretary-General was giving high priority. The high-level panel of experts on information technology was developing an approach to attract the participation of the private sector. The process should result in a comprehensive set of ideas and approaches to submit to Member States as the foundation of the United Nations role in that area of globalization. Those efforts should be seen in the context of the response by the United Nations system to the key challenges of globalization and its role in bringing access to developing countries and encouraging their participation in the information technology marketplace.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.